

CITY OF JESUP, GEORGIA

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) TRANSITION PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

The “Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990” (ADA) is a federal statute that applies to the City of Jesup (“City”). Title II of the ADA is the title that applies to public entities, including state and local governments. The ADA is divided into a number of titles. Title II prevents discrimination on the basis of disability in regard to the provision of state and local government services. “Public entities”—including departments, agencies, or other instrumentalities—are generally required to comply with the ADA.

Title II of the ADA, therefore, requires that all Programs, Services and Activities (PSAs) of public entities, including those considered “instrumentalities” of government, assure that individuals with disabilities have access to all of a government entity’s:

- Programs;
- Services; and
- Activities.

Program accessibility means that, when viewed in its entirety, each program is readily accessible to, and usable by, individuals with disabilities. Program accessibility must be available to individuals with needs related to mobility disabilities and also to individuals with needs related to speech, cognitive, vision and hearing disabilities. The following are a few examples of common barriers to accessibility:

Physical Barriers

- Parking;
- Path of Entry/Travel;
- Doors;
- Service Counters;
- Restrooms;
- Sidewalks;
- Curbs;
- Ramps
- Building Signage; and
- Telephone Access.

Programmatic Barriers

- Customer Communication and Interaction;

- Emergency Notification, Alarms, Visible Signals;
- Communications (via internet, public meetings, telephone); and
- Participation opportunities for events sponsored by the City.

The City's facilities, programs, services, policies, practices and procedures will continue to be surveyed on an on-going basis, and the City's ADA Transition Plan may be revised to account for changes to the City's programs, activities and facilities (as facilities relate to program and service accessibility). This plan will be posted to the City's web site for review and consideration by the public. In addition, notice will be provided of its existence in any official and unofficial City publications.

A. Purpose of Self-Evaluations

The purpose of the City of Jesup, Georgia's periodic American with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluations is to document the results of the City's review of access to programs, services, activities and facilities by individuals with disabilities in order to determine if there are any discriminatory or potentially discriminatory practices, policies or procedures. Reports contain findings and recommendations based on such reviews, or portions thereof, which have been completed to date.

The City of Jesup is committed to complying with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal and state statutes and regulations aimed at making public programs, services and activities accessible to persons with disabilities. According, this commitment is the underlying purpose of the City's periodic self-evaluations.

B. Prior ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plans

The City of Jesup has not conducted a plan prior to 2013 ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan

C. Statement of Accessibility

The City of Jesup will endeavor to make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, procedures or facilities when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the City can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity or would present an undue financial or administrative burden on the City as permitted by the ADA. The City of Jesup will not place surcharges on individuals with disabilities to cover the costs involved in making such programs or facilities accessible.

D. Purpose of Transitional Plans

The intent of this plan is to ensure that the citizens of Jesup are provided full access to the City's programs, services, activities and facilities in as timely a fashion as is reasonably and

fiscally possible. The City's elected officials and staff believe that the ability to accommodate disabled persons is essential to good customer service, the quality of life Jesup residents seek to enjoy and to effective governance. This plan has been prepared after careful study of all of the City's programs, services, activities and facilities, and in view of the City's preceding stated commitment to providing meaningful access to disabled persons.

E. Mission and Vision Statement of the City of Jesup

The mission adopted by the City of Jesup is to be "A safe, clean, family-oriented community with parks and trees that is poised for future growth and dedicated to the advancement of community quality of life; a city government by the principles of responsibility, fiscal soundness, accessibility, and success for a culturally diverse and multi-generational community."

Based on this mission statement, the City of Jesup has committed to the following strategic principles in development and implementation of this plan.

1. *Fiscal Soundness.* The City will endeavor to make ethical, cost-effective use of the resources available in the development and implementation of this plan or any future transitional plan.
2. *Accessibility.* The City recognizes that it has citizens with differing levels of ability that must access the City services, programs and facilities.
3. *Success.* The City will strive to deliver exceptional service to all its customers, internal and external; to continually seek ways to improve its service delivery; and to foster a "customer first" mindset in the City of Jesup.

F. Focus of ADA Self-Evaluations and Transitional Plans

Barriers that deny or limit access to programs, services, activities or facilities may be structural or non-structural. Nonstructural barriers may be due to policies, practices or procedures that may inadvertently limit, segregate or discriminate against individuals with disabilities. The City will perform periodic self-evaluations of accessibility to its programs, services, activities and facilities.

The focus of the City's period self-evaluations and ultimately its transition plans is to promote access to the City's programs, services, activities and facilities in nonstructural or programmatic areas as defined by Title II, Subtitle A.

Nonstructural or programmatic barriers, to the extent identified to this date, are identified in this plan. Selected structural barriers will be discussed in limited situations only as they relate to specific access to the City's programs, services, activities and facilities.

The City completed a review of physical barriers of sites for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Accessibility Guideline (ADAAG) in June of 2013 and has prepared a barrier removal/transition plan.

G. Designated ADA Coordinator

The City Building Inspector of the City of Jesup is the designated ADA Coordinator. The contact information for the City Building inspector is:

Don Herrin
162 East Cherry Street
Jesup, Georgia 31546
dherrin@jesupga.gov
(912) 427-1309 (Telephone)
(912) 427-1329 (Facsimile)

The City offers alternate methods to provide access to review or provide input into the City's plan. Requests for information to the ADA Coordinator can be sent by email, phone, mail, or fax. Information is available in alternate formats upon request.

H. Self-Evaluation Updates

The City's self-evaluations are on-going, and involve periodic review and updating. In its continuing efforts to maintain compliance, the City has several mechanisms in place to provide for an ongoing update of its periodic self-evaluations. One such mechanism is the appointment of an ADA Coordinator. The City's designated ADA Coordinator is empowered with oversight responsibility for implementation of the requirements of the ADA. Additional updates and implementation activities will be documented in the City of Jesup ADA transitional plans as needed.

I. Self-Evaluation Format

Information collected during any self-evaluation process is reported by areas and categories, not individually by departments. A self-evaluation is designed to provide an overall summary and profile of findings and recommendations.

J. Methodology for Self-Evaluation

Several methods were used and will continue to be used to provide comprehensive input regarding the public's accessibility to programs, services, activities and facilities offered and maintained by the City, including:

- Staff interviews;
- Review of policies, procedures and other documents;
- Survey of departments and agencies;

- Survey of facility users;
- Survey of organizations representing individuals with disabilities;
- Visits to selected sites;
- Inspections of selected sites; and
- Public postings and notices requesting input.

Relevant policies, procedures and documents were reviewed. Data was collected regarding programs, services and activities for compliance with requirements of Title II of the ADA. Selected staff interviews were held. Public postings were displayed in City locations asking for input into the study. Postings were also sent to departments for posting and were available on the City of Jesup website.

II. PHYSICAL BARRIERS

The City owns a limited number of properties and, accordingly, does not have many options for locations from which it can offer programs, activities and services without incurring significant financial costs.

A public entity may not deny the benefits of its programs, services and activities to individuals with disabilities because facilities are inaccessible. A public entity's programs, services or activities, when viewed in their entirety, must be readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities. This standard, known as "program accessibility," applies to all existing facilities of a public entity. Public entities, however, are not necessarily required to make each of their existing facilities accessible.

Below is a table of the City's existing facilities:

<u>City Facility</u>	<u>Address</u>
City Hall	162 East Cherry Street
Fire Department	411 West Bay Street
Fire Department #2	617 East Pine Street
Police Department	1355 West Orange Street
Treatment Plant	North Cypress Street
Public Works	447 Northwest Broad Street
Water Department	384 Northwest Broad Street
Train Depot	176 Northwest Broad Street

A self-evaluation/assessment of each of the City's physical facilities with regard to accessibility to the City's programs and services has been completed. The self-evaluations were made of existing baseline conditions at each of the facilities listed in the table above. The evaluations were made based on the criteria for determining the existence of impediments as outlined below.

A. Baseline Conditions

Each of the City's facilities was reviewed in light of several "baseline" conditions, including:

1. Access to parking and entry into the facilities themselves;
2. Access to a clear and distinct path of travel;
3. Access to programs and services themselves;
4. Access to public areas and restrooms; and
5. Access to related amenities.

B. Criteria for Determining Degree of Impediment and Need for Correction

Criteria have been established to determine whether corrective action needs to be taken at a particular facility, including but not limited to:

1. *The nature of unique programs of services.* Some facilities and sites are the only location that a particular program or services may be provided;
2. *Facilities already in compliance with ADA accessibility guidelines.* Some of the City's facilities were constructed and/or underwent major renovations after the effective date of the ADA;
3. *Ability of relocated Programs from one facility to another accessible facility.* Because the City offers special programs and services at more than one locations, consideration will be given to distribution of the special programs and services when viewed in their entirety;
4. *Current state of accessibility.* The current condition of each facility in terms of barriers already removed or planned to be removed will be identified by City administration;
5. *Cost.* The comparison and contrast of the cost of the alternatives to physical barrier removal versus the cost of an alternative corrective action plan, while considering public use; and
6. *Population served.* The population served by a particular program or service, and whether the public can obtain service from an alternative City location.

C. Facility Assessment

The table below details the deficiencies noted at the facilities that have been inspected for compliance with the ADA. Facilities were inspected by the City of Jesup Building Inspector according to prevailing code and standards.

<u>City Facility</u>	<u>Deficiencies Noted</u>
City Hall	ADA Compliant
Fire Department	ADA Compliant
Fire Department #2	Non-Compliant

Police Department	Non-Compliant ¹
Treatment Plant	Non-Compliant
Public Works	Non-Compliant
Water Department	Non-Compliant
Train Depot	ADA Compliant

D. Sidewalk Assessment

The City of Jesup completed a field inventory of sidewalks to assess the overall condition of these feature throughout the City and to determine the level of accessibility and physical locations of any barriers. By conducting a condition assessment, the City was able to identify sidewalk maintenance needs and necessary improvements. The goal is for the City to identify any physical barriers to disabled persons and provide better accessibility to residents through improved connectivity between neighborhoods, commercial corridors, and other community recourses.

The City has performed major changes to the downtown area, such as “streetscape” projects, which consist of replacing sidewalks that are not ADA compliant. There are also sidewalks along major highways (corridors) that have recently been added that are fully ADA compliant.

In addition to ramp characteristics, maintenance needs were also noted in the field at specific locations along each sidewalk segment. Maintenance categories collected in the field include the following:

- Sediment/Vegetation: these were defined areas where excessive vegetation or overgrowth has occurred across a sidewalk.
- Structural Damage: defined as significant damage to the sidewalk material, hindering the movement for wheelchairs or people with other disabilities.
- Obstructions: occur when natural elements or manmade features impede the flow of movement along a sidewalk segment.
- Erosion: instances where erosion, most likely related to drainage, has created an unsafe and potentially dangerous situation along a given sidewalk section.

E. Action Plan

Through periodic self-evaluations, deficiencies in the City’s facilities that diminish the ability of disabled persons to benefit from the City’s programs, services and activities have been identified. For those buildings that have had an assessment, a correction plan or other course of action has been noted for each deficiency.

<u>City Facility</u>	<u>Compliance Status</u>	<u>Plan</u>
City Hall	ADA Compliant	None required
Fire Department	ADA Compliant	None required

¹ The Police Department is temporarily located in an old high school building. Once a new building is provided for the Department, the building will be ADA Compliant.

Fire Department #2	Non-Compliant	Repair as funds become available or retire facility. Public access is already substantially restricted due to policy.
Police Department	Non-Compliant	Repair as funds become available or retire facility. Public access is already substantially restricted due to policy.
Treatment Plant	Non-Compliant	Repair as funds become available or retire facility. Public access is already substantially restricted due to policy.
Public Works	Non-Compliant	Repair as funds become available or retire facility. Public access is already substantially restricted due to policy.
Water Department	Non-Compliant	Repair as funds become available or retire facility. Public access is already substantially restricted due to policy.
Train Depot	ADA Compliant	None required

III. PROGRAMMATIC BARRIERS

The City recognizes that not all barriers to the City's programs, services and activities are physical in nature. Other administrative barriers exist that must be overcome to provide complete government services to those who are disabled.

A. Communications

The City's plan incorporates steps to ensure that communications with people with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. Effective communication means that whatever is written or spoken must be as clear and understandable to people with disabilities as it is for people who do not have disabilities.

The types of communications that the City processes includes web site communications, electronic communications, telephonic communications, written communications, personal interactions, communications relating to City administration and open public meetings, and other generalized communications regarding the City's programs, service and activities. In this regard, the City is in the process of:

- Identifying local resources for auxiliary aids and services,

- Identifying ways of producing documents in Braille or acquiring other aids or services, including software that can convert text into speech, and
- Contacting qualified interpreter services and other providers so that interpreters and other aids and services may be available on short notice.

The City is taking additional specific actions to improve communications, including the following:

1. *Agenda Text.* The City will begin printing certain portions of meeting agendas in large-font type so that the content of agendas of public meetings can be more easily reviewed. Major agenda points will be printed in 14-point font.
2. *Web site communication.* The City posts agendas and minutes on the City's web site, which, when used with the free Adobe Acrobat Reader function, allows for enlargement so that the contents of agendas may be viewed from one's personal computer. The City is exploring software upgrades with its web site service provider to ensure handicap accessibility.

Importantly, the City will explore the implementation of the additions of text equivalents for every image on the web site, as well as using alternative documents formats (such as HTML and Rich Text Formats) to the portable document format (pdf), which is incompatible with certain screen reader functions. The City has also requested that forms and tables be modified to include descriptive HTML tags.

3. *Accommodations for hearing impaired personal use of auxiliary aids.* The City will research the feasibility of incorporating equipment, available upon request, specially designed to assist hearing impaired persons to participate fully in City Council Meetings.
4. *Participation in/ accessibility to public meetings.* The City has, as discussed above, already taken substantial efforts ensuring public meetings are held in ADA-accessible facilities. The City conducts all public meetings in ADA accessible facilities, and to the extent feasible will make specific accommodations, where necessary, to ensure that meetings among residents and City staff can be held within ADA accessible facilities.
5. *Notice to the public of self-evaluation.* Public notices of the City's self-evaluation process will be periodically posted in conspicuous locations (e.g., on the City web site, in the local newspaper, on local radio, etc.) as self-evaluations are performed. The notice will include the following wording:

The City Jesup, Georgia is in the process of conducting an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) self-evaluation and transition plan. Areas to be evaluated include facility accessibility, accommodations for individuals with disabilities and administrative policies and procedures.

Your comments and opinions are important to us and will provide valuable information regarding how the City of Jesup can better accommodate individuals with disabilities. Surveys can be mailed to you, are available on the city web site at www.jesupga.gov or available at:

Jesup City Hall
162 East Cherry Street
Jesup, Georgia 31546

Please contact Don Herrin, City Building Inspector and ADA Coordinator at 912-427-1309 or dherrin@jesupga.gov, if you have questions or comments or would like a survey in an alternate format. Information regarding the Americans with Disabilities Act can be obtained from the ADA Coordinator.

The City of Jesup complies with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability.

The identity of the ADA Coordinator will also be noted and posted in City publications and at City facilities.

B. Accommodation of Disabled Persons in Municipally-Sponsored Programs

The City is committed to allowing persons with disabilities to participate in municipally sponsored programs. This includes recreational opportunities sponsored at the City's parks and recreational facilities, community forums and other events hosted, sponsored or operated by the City. The City intends to achieve this goal by integrating all of the steps outlined above into these programs, including providing for effective communications and ensuring meeting and events are, to the extent possible, held in ADA-accessible parks and facilities.

The City sponsors a festival during the third week in October known as "Arch Fest," which is located in the downtown area. The City provides handicap toilet facilities located in accessible areas.

The City also provides backdoor pickup for elderly or disabled residents who are unable to bring their trash bin to the curb. This service is advertised publicly through alternate forms of communication to ensure that disabled residents are aware of the service.

C. Conclusion/Action Log

The City is taking the action to look for and timely remedy barriers to access in an effort to ensure that the disabled citizens of Jesup are given access to the City's programs, services, activities, and facilities.

To confirm follow-up on corrective actions required under the City's ADA transition planning, the City will institute an ADA Action Log, which will document its efforts at compliance and anticipated completion dates for ADA-related remedies. After the adoption of this plan by the Mayor and City Council of the City, the ADA Action Log will be updated on an annual basis. The City will endeavor to make the ADA Action Log available upon request.

IV. ADA GRIEVANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

A grievance procedure has been developed to provide for prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action prohibited by the U.S. Department of Justice regulations,

which implement Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Grievances should be filed with the City's ADA Coordinator at:

City of Jesup
City Building Inspector
Attn: Don Herrin
162 East Cherry Street
Jesup, Georgia 31546
912-427-1309

The Grievance Procedure consists of the following:

1. A complaint should be filed in writing (but can be submitted in alternate format due to the needs of an individual's disability), containing the name and address of the person filing it, and briefly describing the alleged violation of ADA regulation or discriminatory act.
2. A complaint should be filed within thirty (30) calendar days after the complainant becomes aware of the alleged violation. (Processing of allegations of discrimination, which occurred before this grievance procedure was in place, will be considered on a case-by-case basis).
3. An investigation, as may be appropriate, will follow the filing of a complaint and will be conducted by the City's ADA Coordinator. The Grievance Procedures contemplate informal but thorough investigations, affording all interested parties and their representatives, if any, an opportunity to submit evidence relevant to a complaint.
4. The City's ADA Coordinator will provide for review by the City Attorney a written determination as to the validity of the complaint and a description of the resolution, if any, and a copy of the original complaint, and a copy will be forwarded to the City Manager along with the original complaint, no later than thirty (30) days after its filing.
5. The City's ADA Coordinator will maintain the files and records of the City of Jesup relating to all ADA Grievances/complaints filed.
6. The right of a person to a prompt and equitable resolution of the complaint filed hereunder will not be impaired by the person's pursuit of other remedies such as the filing of an ADA complaint with the responsible federal department of agency, such as the U.S. Department of Justice at (800) 514-0301. Use of this grievance procedure is not a prerequisite to the pursuit of other remedies.
7. These rules will be constructed to protect the substantive rights of interested persons to meet appropriate due process standards, and to assure that the City of Jesup complies with the ADA and implementing regulations.
8. The Grievance Form will be in substantially the following format:

**CITY OF JESUP
ADA GRIEVANCE FORM**

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Email Address : _____

Location of problem: _____

Date noticed: _____

Description of problem:

***Please attach additional pages if needed**

This complaint should be submitted by the grievant and/or his/her designee as soon as possible but no later than 30 calendar days after the alleged violation to:

**City of Jesup
Building Inspector/ADA Coordinator
162 East Cherry Street
Jesup, Georgia 31546
912-427-1313**

V. REASONABLE MODIFICATION POLICY/ACCESS TO PROGRAMS, SERVICES, AND ACTIVITIES

A. Non-Discrimination

No person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any City program or activity.

B. Individuals with Disabilities

No qualified individual with a disability shall, by reason of such disability, be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of, the services, programs, or activities of the City, or be subjected to discrimination by the City. The City shall not exclude or otherwise deny equal services, programs, or activities to an individual because of the known association of that individual with another individual who is known to have a disability.

C. Definition of Individual with Disability

A “qualified individual with a disability” is an individual with a disability who, with or without reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices, the removal or architectural, communication, or transportation barriers, or the provision of auxiliary aids and services, meets the essential eligibility requirements for the receipt of services or the participation in programs or activities provided by the City.

D. Reasonable Modification

The City shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless the City can demonstrate that making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the service, program, or activity.

E. Communications

The City shall take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with applicants, participants, and members of the public with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. To this end, the City will endeavor to furnish appropriate auxiliary aids or services as necessary to afford an individual with a disability an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, a service, program, or activity conducted by the City. In determining what type of auxiliary aid or service is necessary, the City shall give primary consideration to the requests of the individual with disabilities.

F. Auxiliary Aids and Services

“Auxiliary aids and services” includes:

- a. Qualified interpreters, note takers, transcription services, written materials, assistive listening systems, and the other effective methods for making aurally delivered materials available to individuals with hearing impairments.
- b. Qualified readers, taped texts, audio recordings, brailled materials, large print materials, or other effective methods for making visually delivered materials available to individual with visual impairments.
- c. Acquisitions or modification of equipment or devices.
- d. Other similar services and actions.

G. Limits of Required Modification

The City is not required to take any action that it can demonstrate would result in: a fundamental alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity; or an undue financial cost; or an administrative alteration in the nature of a service, program, or activity; or undue financial and administrative burdens. Any decision in compliance with its responsibility to provide effective communication and access for individuals with disabilities that would fundamentally alter the service, program, or activity or unduly burden the City will be made by the City Council after considering all resources available for use in funding and operation the program, service, or activity. The decision will be accompanied by a written statement of the reasons for reaching that conclusion.

H. Notice

The City shall make available to applicants, participants, beneficiaries, and other interested persons information regarding the provision of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its applicability to the services, programs, or activities of the City. The information shall be made available in such manner as the City ADA Coordinator finds necessary to apprise such persons of the protections against discrimination assured them by the ADA.

I. City ADA Coordinator

The City ADA Coordinator shall coordinate the City’s efforts to comply with and carry out its responsibilities under Title II of the ADA, including any investigation of any complaint communicated to it alleging its noncompliance or alleging any actions that would be prohibited under the ADA. The City shall make available to all interested individuals the name, office address, and telephone number of the employee(s) so designated and shall adopt and publish procedures for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints alleging any action that would be prohibited under the ADA.